

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A video transmission system, comprising:
 - a video source;
 - a video server adapted to receive video data from the video source, the video server operable to buffer the video data and transmit the video data across a network; and
 - a video retransmitter residing on a first computing device and adapted to receive the video data via the network from the video server, said video retransmitter operable to buffer the video data and re-transmit the video data to a second computing device.
2. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the video source is further defined as a digital camera.
3. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the video server is integrated with the video source.
4. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the second computing device is operable to display the video data.

5. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the second computing device is adapted to receive the video data from the video server and the video retransmitter, and operable to select a source for the video data based on a metric associated with the transmission path of the video data from the source.

6. The video transmission system of Claim 5 wherein the second computing device is configurable to receive the video data from the selected source.

7. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the second computing device is adapted to receive the video data via the network from the video retransmitter.

8. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the second computing device is adapted to receive the video data via another network from the video retransmitter.

9. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the video server receives the video data at a first resolution and the re-transmitter is operable to re-transmit the video data at a second resolution different from the first resolution.

10. The video transmission system of Claim 1 wherein the video server is operable to maintain a directory, where the directory includes a list of client computing devices to whom video data is currently being sent and which are configured to retransmit the video data.

11. The video transmission system of Claim 10 wherein each entry in the directory identifies a source whose video data is capable of being retransmitted from a source other than the video server, a network address for the identified source; and an indicator as to whether the video data is being received on a dedicated basis.

12. The video transmission system of Claim 10 wherein the video server is adapted to receive requests for the video data and operable to log an entry into the directory when the requesting computing device is configured to retransmit the video data.

13. The video transmission system of Claim 10 wherein said directory is accessible to the second computing device, the second computing device being operable to evaluate each alternative source for the video data being requested; and selecting a source for the video data based on a metric associated with the transmission path of the video data from the source.

14. A method for transmitting video data across a network environment, comprising:

- receiving video data at a video server from a digital camera and buffering the video data in a data store residing on the video server;

- transmitting the video data from the video server across a network to a first client computing device;

- buffering the video data in a data store residing on the first client computing device; and

- retransmitting the video data from the first client computing device to a second client computing device.

15. The method of Claim 14 wherein the step of transmitting the video server from the video server further comprises:

- receiving a request for the video data from the first client computing device;

- determining whether the first client computing device is configured to retransmit the video data; and

- logging an entry in a retransmitter directory when the first client computing device is configured to retransmit the video data.

16. The method of Claim 14 wherein the step of buffering the video data further comprises determining whether the video data may be retrieved from an alternative data source.

17. The method of Claim 16 wherein the step of determining further comprises:

accessing a retransmitter directory residing on the video server, where the directory is a list of client computing devices to whom video data is currently being sent and which are configured to retransmit the video data;

evaluating a metric associated with each alternative source for the video data being buffered; and

selecting a source for the video data based on said metrics.

18. The method of Claim 17 wherein the metric is associated with a transmission path of the video data from the evaluated source.

19. The method of Claim 16 wherein the step of buffering the video data further comprises periodically reassessing whether the video data may be retrieved from an alternative data source.

20. The method of Claim 14 wherein the step of transmitting the video data from the video server further comprises transmitting the video data from the video server at a resolution different than a resolution of the video data received at the video server.

21. The method of Claim 14 wherein the step of retransmitting the video data from the first client computing device further comprises transmitting the video data at a resolution different than a resolution of the video data received at the first client computing device.